



**California Fire Safe Council
Request for Applications
Grants Clearinghouse 2013 Competitive Grants Program**

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Tentative Dates:

May 21, 2012	Issuance of Request for Applications. Grants Clearinghouse Opens
July 31, 2012	Application Submission Deadline (before 12:00 midnight PST)

Synopsis of Grant Opportunity:

The California Fire Safe Council is accepting applications for wildfire prevention grant funds through the U.S. Forest Service. Unfortunately there are no funds available for the Department of Interior agencies which include the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Parks Service. Grant funding may be used for hazardous fuels reduction and maintenance projects on non-federal land; development of community risk assessments and Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP); and provision of education and outreach opportunities for landowners and residents in at-risk communities.

This document is formatted for double-sided printing/copying to conserve paper.

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2013 Cycle

- Updated Written Request for Applications (RFA).
- Updated Grant Application Planning Tool.
- Revised scoring criteria.
- Focus on National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy
- Maximum grant award of \$200,000 per organization.
- Maximum number of grant submissions is 2 per applicant.
- A fiscal sponsor may submit 2 of its own application(s) and receive up to a maximum of \$200,000. The fiscal sponsor may fiscally sponsor up to 5 organizations and they may submit 2 applications each.

The 2013 Request for Applications consists of three parts:

- **Part I** (this document) contains information on the funding opportunities and the application process. Once you finish reading this RFA, you may begin working on your application at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org> on or after May 21, 2012, or you may download Part II, the application planning tool (*you are encouraged to review all three parts of the RFA before beginning your application*).
- **Part II** is a *revised* grant application planning tool designed to assist prospective applicants. The planning tool is a Microsoft Word file with all of the grant application's questions and instructions. This file allows you to work on your application offline, save your work and spell-check your responses. When you are ready to apply online, you may cut and paste your information from the planning tool to the Grants Clearinghouse application.
- **Part III** (found at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>) contains examples of documents your organization may need to submit with your application (i.e., Fiscal Sponsor Agreement letter, Letters of Commitment, Letters of Commitment cover letter).

Good luck!



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THINGS TO REMEMBER

Letters of Commitment

Letters of Commitment are required from all partners contributing funds or in-kind services to an applicant's proposed project. Applicants themselves must also provide a Letter of Commitment if they propose to contribute match to their project.

Fiscal Sponsor Agreement

Unincorporated groups/organizations must have a fiscal sponsor. These applicants must submit a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement with their Letters of Commitment. The Fiscal Sponsor Agreement is a written and signed document on the fiscal sponsor's letterhead indicating the fiscal sponsor will act on behalf of the applicant to receive, spend and otherwise manage the grant funds and property assets associated with the applicant's grant project in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. Fiscal sponsors are considered co-applicant's since they will sign the subaward agreement with the unincorporated group(s). Fiscal sponsors are required to carry insurance sufficient to protect the assets of the grant.

Initial Review

All submitted applications will be reviewed for completeness. Only those applications that are complete will move forward to the Review Committee. The initial review criteria are:

- Was the application received on time?
- Is the applicant an eligible organization?
- Did the applicant submit two applications?
- Was the application complete? (Were all appropriate questions answered and Letters of Commitment submitted correctly, if needed.)
- Were all Letters of Commitment (1) received on time; (2) on organizational letterhead; (3) signed and (4) from the same sources listed in the application?
- Did the match/cost-share amounts in the Letters of Commitment equal the amounts in the application?
- If the applicant indicated they would provide match, did they submit a Letter of Commitment?
- If the applicant has a fiscal sponsor, was a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement submitted with the Letters of Commitment?
- Does the application dollar request not exceed \$200,000?

Applications that satisfy all of the above criteria will move forward to the Review Committee.

Applications that do not meet any one of the above requirements will be disqualified.



PART I – CLEARINGHOUSE INFORMATION

1. CLEARINGHOUSE BACKGROUND

The Grants Clearinghouse is a program of the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC). It is an online grants application process that makes it easier to find and apply for wildfire prevention grants to support community projects.

Through master grants to the California Fire Safe Council, some federal agency members of the California Fire Alliance spearheaded the development of the Grants Clearinghouse to originally help achieve the goals of the National Fire Plan by facilitating an open, collaborative process for grant funding. The Grants Clearinghouse expands the playing field to more organizations by making it easier to find and apply for grants. It increases collaboration among agencies by sharing information and facilitating planning across agency boundaries which will demonstrate California's needs and accomplishment to Congress.

CFSC's Clearinghouse enhances existing relationships between communities and federal agencies, and helps create new relationships by expanding funding opportunities for eligible organizations and agencies alike.

Your organization submits an application to the CFSC Clearinghouse. Applications are then reviewed by an independent Review Committee and, if selected for funding, will be paired with the most appropriate source of funds. Eligible unfunded applications are placed on a hold list. The California Fire Safe Council monitors the hold list should additional funding become available throughout the year. Eligible unfunded applications are held until the next Clearinghouse cycle. All applicants are encouraged to apply in order to help demonstrate greater need throughout the State.



2. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. Forest Service State Fire Assistance (SFA)

PROGRAM & ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Funds are available for all fire management activities including training, planning, hazardous fuel treatments, and fire prevention education programs. This program emphasizes fire risk reduction activities by landowners and residents in at-risk communities to restore and maintain resilient landscapes and create fire-adapted communities.

Programs or activities proposed for SFA funds must meet the following criteria:

- Projects must be in the WUI and protecting a [Community-at-Risk \(CAR\)](#).
- Projects not on Federal lands.
- Programs, projects, or activities must address areas identified and prioritized in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or equivalent document.
- Proposed projects should align with the applicable primary factors, guiding principles and core values identified in Phase I of the Cohesive Strategy.

Hazardous fuel reduction proposals can include the purchase of needed supplies and tools (such as chainsaws, personal protective supplies, hand tools, etc.).

Applicants should be able to complete projects within a 24-month grant term. If funded, applicants will be asked to report specific accomplishments, such as acres treated, and provide before, during and after photos.

PROHIBITED PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

Purchase of vehicles or heavy equipment such as tub grinders and other expensive assets will not be funded (suggest rental or lease of these items). Construction and purchasing land are not allowable under the State Fire Assistance Program.

2013 FUNDING

There are two SFA grant programs with available funds in the 2013 cycle.

- **\$4.5 million in State Fire Assistance or “SFA” funds.**
 - These funds require a 50/50 cost share/match, which means the federal funding can account for up to 50% of the project’s cost. The remaining 50% must come from non-federal sources and can include cash and/or third-party in-kind.
- **\$1 million in State Fire Assistance or “SFAX” funds.**



- These funds require a 50/50 cost share/match, which means the federal funding can account for up to 50% of the project's cost. The remaining 50% must come from non-federal sources and can include cash and/or in-kind.
 - These funds have an additional emphasis on aligning with the applicable primary factors, guiding principles and core values identified in Phase I of the Cohesive Strategy.
- Information on matching contributions or in-kind goods and services:
 - They shall not be derived from other federal assistance programs
 - They shall not be used as an in-kind contribution toward cost matching requirements for any other grant program
 - Their value will be determined using scales and estimates appropriate for the local area
 - They will not include grant application preparation fees

Total value of USFS projects selected for funding in FFY 2012: \$4.1 million

Average size of USFS grants in FFY 2012: \$100,000

A. Award Information

The award type is a grant.

The average grant award for 2012 was \$100,000.

The length of the project should be 24 months or less. Successful applicants in prior years who want to continue or expand their currently funded projects should submit new applications.

The maximum amount of funding a single organization may receive is \$200,000.

Fiscal sponsors may submit applications for their own organization and receive up to a total of \$200,000.

Fiscal sponsors may also manage up to the sum total of \$200,000 for all the organization(s) they sponsor.



3. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

- Nonprofit Organizations
- Home/Property Owners Associations
- Native American Tribes
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Municipalities: Towns and Cities
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Joint-Powers Authorities
- Special Districts
- School Districts
- Counties
- State Agencies
- For-profit Companies
- Other (specify in the online application form)

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Unincorporated groups/organizations must have a fiscal sponsor. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor is responsible for signing the sub-award agreement, receiving grant funds; paying bills; monitoring the applicant's expenditures; and ensuring the applicant implements the funded project. Fiscal sponsors are considered co-applicant's since they will sign the subaward agreement with the unincorporated group(s). It is possible the fiscal sponsor may need to perform an A-133 audit. These applicants must submit a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter with their Letters of Commitment. (See Part III for a sample Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter.) The fiscal sponsor is also required to carry insurance sufficient to protect the assets of the grant.

The maximum amount of funding a single organization may receive is \$200,000.

Fiscal sponsors may submit to (2) applications for their own organization and receive up to a total of \$200,000. Fiscal sponsors may also fiscally sponsor up to five (5) organizations that can submit two (2) applications each. Fiscal sponsors may manage up to the sum total of \$200,000 for all the organization(s) they sponsor.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.



B. Cost Sharing/Matching

Federal funds received through the California Fire Safe Council must be matched with non-Federal funds according to the following table:

Federal Agency	Anticipated Cost Share/Match Percentage*
US Forest Service	50%* of the total project cost

** Match percentages subject to change*

Cost share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in federal regulations (see: 2 CFR 215 and OMB Circular A-102).

Priority will be given to programs or projects where recipients provide matching contributions or in-kind goods and services, with the following limits on in-kind goods and services:

- They shall not be derived from other federal assistance programs
- They shall not be used as an in-kind contribution toward cost matching requirements for any other grant program
- Their value will be determined using scales and estimates appropriate for the local area
- They will not include grant application preparation fees

Federal Title III (Secure Rural Schools) funds are allowable as match under some circumstances. Please consult with your county official that oversees its Title III allocation. Additional information about Title III can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/Title-III.shtml>.

Letters of Commitment must be submitted by all organizations providing matching funds to your project. *If your organization will provide matching funds to the project, your organization must submit its own Letter of Commitment.*



4. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Package

This announcement contains all narrative instructions to complete an application package and includes Web links to additional useful resources.

B. Form of Application Submission

- Applications must be submitted online at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>. To submit an application, your organization must have an account with the Clearinghouse. To create an account, visit <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org> and click “Click Here to Register” on the left hand side of the screen.
- Letters of Commitment must be sent via US Mail or UPS/FedEx to the appropriate Grant Manager listed below.
- Letters of Commitment must be postmarked by the grant application deadline for your project to be considered for funding. *If you would like confirmation that your letters were received by the California Fire Safe Council, please use a Return Receipt/Delivery Confirmation from the U.S. Postal Service or send your letters via UPS or FedEx with a delivery tracking number.* Due to the potential volume of inquiries, the California Fire Safe Council will be unable to notify you that your letters were received, either by phone or email. Letters may not be submitted via e-mail or fax.
- The California Fire Safe Council is not responsible for Letters of Commitment that are sent to an incorrect address by applicants.
- If your organization is required to use a fiscal sponsor, you must submit a Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter with your Letters of Commitment (postmarked by the grant application deadline).

Pre-application assistance and communication: grant writing workshops and online webinars will be held throughout California. Please check <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org> for the date, time and location of a workshop or webinar near you. Questions regarding this Request For Applications can be referred to your region’s grant manager. Please contact your Grant Manager no less than five (5) days prior to the application deadline if you wish the Grant Manager to review your application and/or Letters of Commitment for accuracy, completeness and eligibility according to the 2013 program guidelines.

Grant Manager	Email address & Phone Number	Counties
Katie Ziemann Grant Manager	kziemann@cafiresafecouncil.org (626) 335-7426 California Fire Safe Council 502 W. Route 66, Suite 17 Glendora, CA 91740	Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Ventura, San Luis Obispo, Kern, San Diego, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino



<p>Liron Galliano Grant Manager</p>	<p>lgalliano@cafiresafecouncil.org (888) 320-1159 California Fire Safe Council 5834 Price Avenue, Suite 101 McClellan, CA 95652</p>	<p>Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Napa, San Benito, Santa Clara, Monterey, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Placer, El Dorado, Sacramento, Amador, Calaveras, Alpine, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Mono, Fresno, Tulare, Inyo, Madera, King</p>
<p>Dan Lang Grant Manager</p>	<p>dlang@cafiresafecouncil.org (800) 257-7066 California Fire Safe Council 5834 Price Avenue, Suite 101 McClellan, CA 95652</p>	<p>Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Mendocino, Trinity, Lake, Yolo Modoc, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Glenn, Butte, Sierra, Yuba, Nevada, Eastern Placer, Eastern El Dorado and Nevada counties in the Lake Tahoe Basin.</p>

C. Letters of Commitment

- Letters of Commitment (LOC), and Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letters if applicable, must be postmarked by the application deadline and sent via US Mail or UPS/FedEx to the appropriate Grant Manager in the table above. Letters submitted by e-mail or fax will not be accepted. All LOCs must be signed by an organizational authority.
- All organizations providing match/cost-share to a project must submit a Letter of Commitment detailing their matching contribution (i.e., a description of the service(s) provided and the dollar value of the service(s) or donation). All LOCs must be signed.
- If the applicant organization proposes to contribute match, the applicant must submit its own Letter of Commitment.
- All Letters of Commitment must be preceded by a signed cover letter from the applicant organization listing all of the partner organizations, including the applicant, providing match and the dollar value of their proposed match. (See Part III for a sample LOC cover letter.)
- Organizational names, and proposed match amounts, in the Letters of Commitment must match the organizations, and match amounts, listed in the LOC cover letter and in your online application.
- Letters of Commitment must be submitted on company or organizational letterhead and signed by an authorized representative with spending authority.
- The California Fire Safe Council is not responsible for Letters of Commitment that are sent to an incorrect address by applicants.

D. Submission Dates & Times

- **Application deadline: July 31, 2012 before 12:00 midnight (PST)**
- Applications received after the deadline specified above, for any reason, will not be considered for funding.



- Applications must be submitted online at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>
- Letters of Commitment must be mailed to the appropriate Grant Manager listed on page 10. Letters submitted by email or fax will not be accepted.

E. Other Submission Requirements

- No more than two (2) applications per organization may be submitted.
- Fiscal sponsors may submit two (2) applications of their own in addition to the application submitted by the organizations they are fiscally sponsoring.
- The maximum amount of funding a single organization may receive is \$200,000—either through one grant or a combination of multiple grants.
- Fiscal sponsors may also manage up to the sum total of \$200,000 for all the organization(s) they sponsor.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

An initial review will determine if a project can be considered for funding based on the following criteria:

- Application received on time.
- Applicant is an eligible organization.
- Applicant submitted only 2 applications (more than 2 will not be accepted).
- Was the application complete? (Were all appropriate questions answered and Letters of Commitment submitted correctly, if needed.)
- All Letters of Commitment are (1) received on time; (2) on organizational letterhead; (3) signed and (4) from the same sources listed in the application.
- Total match amount in Letters of Commitment equals match amount in application.
- If the applicant proposes to contribute matching funds, they submitted their own signed Letter of Commitment on letterhead.
- If the applicant has a fiscal sponsor, they submitted a signed Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Letter with the Letters of Commitment.
- Application dollar request does not exceed \$200,000.

Applications passing initial review will be scored by the Grant Review Committee—an independent, volunteer panel of experts in wildfire issues and grants review/selection—based on the criteria below. The Grant Review Committee selects the projects for funding.



Review Committee’s Scoring Criteria	Total Points Possible
1. The organization/fiscal sponsor has a history of successful completion of similar projects. The organization/fiscal sponsor can feasibly add and complete an additional project without overtaxing its resources including staff workload.	5
2. The project demonstrates specific, advance planning for long-term sustainability following the conclusion of the grant period.	5
3. The proposed project appropriately addresses the wildland fire problem through fire hazard and/or risk reduction within the project area?	5
4. The project will ___ create, or ___ be linked to (check which option applies), an interagency Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), collaborative community fire plan or an equivalent.	5
5. The proposed project will improve wildfire survivability in or within 3 miles of a community appearing on the current California Fire Alliance “communities at-risk” list.	5
6. The proposed project is within 3 miles of the wildland urban interface (WUI) and is within an area designated by Cal Fire as a “Very High Severity Zone”.	5
7. The proposed project is aligned with the guiding principles and core values of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.	5
8. The detailed project description is realistic, clearly written and easy to understand. It demonstrates involvement of key partners in terms of matching funds “Key partners” is understood to mean relevant federal agency staff, local fire and/or other government agencies, and/or other sources of significant resources for proposed project.	5
9. Costs are reasonable in proportion to the proposed deliverables. Administrative costs (rent/utilities/insurance, if applicable) are spread among the listed categories (and spread between all funding sources, if organization has other funding.) Staff costs (personnel/contractors/benefits) should be considered direct project expense.	5
10. The project will: a) Reduce hazardous fuels by treating acres in or within 3 miles of wildland urban interface (WUI) areas, or areas designated as high risk zones in a CWPP or approved equivalent or CALFIRE map AND b) Provide educational activities/materials or create a CWPP to assist residents in increasing their wildfire survivability.	5



B. Important Dates (Subject to Change)

May 21, 2012 Issuance of Request for Applications. Grants Clearinghouse Opens
July 31, 2012 Application Submission Deadline (before 12:00 midnight PST)

6. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Funding decisions will be available on the California Fire Safe Council’s website
<http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>. Date TBD.

B. Administrative and Pre-Award Requirements

Grants made through this funding opportunity will be governed by the sub-award agreement between the California Fire Safe Council and the organization. All National Policy Requirements and appropriate federal regulations and OMB Circulars must be followed (see table below). It is recommended applicants review the OMB Circulars before they submit applications.

Organization Type	Cost Principles	Administrative Requirements
State, local or tribal governments	2 CFR Part 225	OMB Circular A-102
Non-profits	2 CFR Part 230	2 CFR Part 215
Institutions of Higher Education	2 CFR Part 220	2 CFR Part 215
For-profits	2 CFR Part 215	FAR 31.2

Cost principles and administrative requirements can be found online at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars>

Pre-Award Requirements

Do not submit these documents with your application. If your project is funded, you will be contacted by a representative from the California Fire Safe Council with further information.

Successful applicants must provide the documents listed below to the California Fire Safe Council. This will assist in the smooth processing of your application and the preparation of the sub-award agreement.

- IRS determination letter (for nonprofit organizations)
- Insurance certificate (or self-insurance letter) for all forms of insurance (except employee benefits)
- Last two years’ independent audits and all forms of management letters from your CPA (if available)



- Last two years' IRS Form 990 or 990EZ
- Copy of any audit reports prepared as a result of a visit by a federal agency
- Copy of your organization's by-laws (for nonprofit organizations and HOAs)
- Copy of your organization's board of directors roster (names, addresses, phone numbers and other contact information)
- Copy of your approved Federal Indirect Cost Rate agreement (for applicants claiming indirect expenses)
- Project maps (per specific requirements)
- Environmental reports from other agencies for projects on adjacent parcels (if available) **OR** a copy of a report from a previous grant for the same project area. (If no environmental clearance work has been done in the past, the current project will be reviewed for compliance with appropriate federal laws as part of the award process.)
- Copy of your organization's Drug-Free Workplace Statement (for applicants with employees)
- Copy of your organization's National Incident Management System (NIMS) adoption (for applicant's that are fire protection agencies)
- Certification of Debarment Status on form AD 1048
- Salary Certification Letter

C. Reporting

Periodic program and financial reports, a final report, and a detailed grant closeout report will be required as a condition of this award. This information, including due dates for reports, will be outlined in the official sub-award agreement provided to successful applicants.

Progress reports at stipulated intervals and final reports will be submitted online at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>.

In addition, sub-grantees will be required to submit before and after photos of their project on a CD to their Grant Manager at the close of their grant and copies of relevant project materials created using grant funds.

Source documents corroborating project expenditures and matching funds may be required to be submitted with every progress report, and must match totals entered for that period on the progress report.

At the conclusion of the grant, grantees are required to return any unspent grant funds plus any interest earned above \$250 (for nonprofit organizations) or \$100 (for public or quasi-public entities). Additionally, the grantee will also be required to submit a CD copy of all grant materials.



D. Mandatory Pre-Award Workshop and Webinars

Successful applicants are required to attend a pre-award grants management workshop. These workshops are held throughout the state and offered as an online webinar. Dates, times and locations will be posted online after the preliminary funding decisions are announced.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Environmental Compliance

All approved projects must undergo a mandatory environmental review, by the appropriate federal agencies, for compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA); the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and, the National Historical Preservation Act (NHPA). This is required of all approved projects—no exceptions. If specific mitigation measures or additional studies of the project area are required, representatives from the federal agency will contact sub-grantees directly. Grant funds may be used to pay for environmental compliance studies.

Projects funded through the Grants Clearinghouse are not subject to NEPA; however, they must still comply with the above-mentioned acts (ESA, MBTA and NHPA). It is likely that CEQA will apply to fuels projects.

Grantees are responsible for complying with all applicable state, local and special commission environmental regulations.

B. Indirect Costs

To be eligible to charge indirect expenses to a grant, your organization must have a federally approved Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. A copy of your current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement will be required if your application is approved for funding. (Note: very few applicants have such an agreement. Lack of this agreement should not be a concern.) If your organization does not have an approved Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, your administrative and overhead expenses must be distributed throughout your budget.

C. Insurance Requirement

You must have sufficient insurance coverage to protect the assets of the grant (i.e., the amount of the grant award). Please consult with your insurance broker to determine the most appropriate policies for your project given the abovementioned requirement and the nature of the work being performed (e.g., general liability, Directors & Officers, Errors & Omissions, fidelity bond)



D. Equipment

Equipment is defined as a purchase of a tangible item with a unit price of \$5,000 or more and with a lifespan of more than one year. Equipment purchased with grant funds must be tracked by the California Fire Safe Council, as well as the grantee. Purchase of equipment with Clearinghouse grant funds is generally not encouraged.

In order to request purchase of equipment, such as a chipper, you must conduct a cost benefit analysis regarding the potential purchase, which would include surveying to see if there is available excess similar federal equipment; and comparison between leasing and purchasing the identified equipment, including comparison pricing. The request to purchase equipment must be submitted in writing to a Grant Manager at the time of application.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Is your organization interested in applying for a grant?

Take the next step!

Click the link below to access the Grant Application Planning Tool and the Sample Forms and Resources.

<http://grants.firesafecouncil.org/>



(If the above link does not work, cut and paste the address into your web browser.)